its adverse impact on our tea industry which is a major source of foreign exchange; and

(c) if so, whether Government will withdraw the concessions to protect the indigenous tea industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Under the provisions of the Free Trade Agreement signed with Sri Lanka, the lists of items of which tariff concessions are to be provided by each side, are to be exchanged within 60 days of signing of the Agreement. The lists are being finalised at present. The concerns of various sections of the industry, including the tea industry, are being kept in mind while finalising the lists.

WTO Talks

625. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has asked for benefits before fresh WTO talks;

(b) if so, the details of India's viewpoint; and

(c) the steps taken to form a common front of developing nations to flight their causes in the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The range of WTO Agreements which constitute a rule based system for the governance of International trade, represent a balance of rights, concessions, commitments and obligations on the part of all member countries. India is a founder member of both the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1947 and its successor organization, the World Trade Organization or WTO, which came into effect on 1.1.95 after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round (UR) of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. India's participation in an increasingly rule based system in the governance of international trade is to ensure more stability and predictability, which ultimately would lead to more trade and more prosperity for itself and the other member nations of the WTO. India also automatically avails of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) and national treatment for its exports from all WTO Members.

In the Geneva Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in May, 1998 India had highlighted diffculties faced by developing countires in implementing WTO Agreements and emphasized the need to ensure that International trade subserves the needs of development and that it works towards raising the standards of living of all countries, especially developing and least developed countries. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration upheld the Indian approach and placed implementation issues at the top of the agenda in the work programme for the Third Ministerial Conference, scheduled to be held between 30 November and 3rd December, 1999 in the United States of America. The Geneva Ministerial Conference decided that a process would be Initiated in the General Council for considering implementation issues, issues mandated in the Uruguay Round Agreements, issues arising out of the Marrakesh and Singapore Ministerial Conferences and other issues relating to multilateral trade which are agreed upon by all member countries.

India has taken a pro-active and active role *vis-a-vis* the multilateral trading system by way of numerous papers circulated and intervention made at WTO and related international trade fora. In the context of the ongoing preparatory process in the General Council for the Third Ministerial Conference, India has submitted papers relating to (1) Differential and More Favourable Treatment of Developing and Least Developed Countires in various WTO Agreements; (2) Unilateral Trade Measures; (3) Customs Valuation; and (4) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues. Besides, a number of other papers

have been placed before other WTO bodies, highlighting India's concerns. These include the Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Dispute Settlement Body, Working Group on Trade and Competition Policy, Working Group on Trade and Investment, Committee on Trade and Environment and others. A special thrust has been taken by India with regard to the Special and Differential Treatment provisions for developing countries, which need to be translated into guidelines for implementation in order that benefits actually accure thereform to the developing countries. India has also been actively protecting its interest in the WTO and questioning non-tariff barriers raised by developed countries. Whenever instance of unwarranted barriers to market access are found to be actionable under WTO rules, disputes have been initiated under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.

(c) India works very closely with other developing countries. A group of like minded developing countries including India, Egypt, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Malaysia, Indonesia and several other countries meets regularly at Geneva to discuss issues and coordinate strategy. The G-15 countries met on 10-11 December, 1998 in New Delhi and strongly reiterated the need to address concerns about implementation especially relating to special and differential treatment provision of WTO agreements upfront and without linkage to any future negotiations. The recommendations of the G-15 Symposium were placed for consideration of Trade Minister at their meeting at Montego Bay in Jamaica on 6 February, 1999 followed by G-15 summit at the same venue on 10-11 February, 1999. The G-15 countries have resolved to coordinate their strategy in the WTO process. SAARC countries have also been meeting periodically to discuss WTO issues and work out common strategies.

Revamping Export Promotion Council

626. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
PROF VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revamp Export Promotion Councils with a view to showing their functioning and lifting the sagging export; and

(b) if so, the details in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The performance of Export Promotion Councils is reviewed on a regular basis with special reference to the mandate given to them. Government is continuously making efforts to strengthen these Councils to enable them to cater to the needs and fulfill the aspiration of the exporting community in an effective manner.

(b) A Sub-Committee has been constituted to look into this matter. Its report is under finalisation.

आभूषणों के निर्यात को बढ़ावा देने हेतु उठाए गए कदम

627. श्रीमती मालती शर्मा:
प्रो॰ रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा:

क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने देश से आभूषणों के निर्यात को बढ़ावा देने हेतु ठोस कदम उठाए हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) वर्ष 1999-2000 के लिए आभूषणों के निर्यात का क्या लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया गया है?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री रामकृष्ण हेगड़े): (क) और (ख) जी, हां। सरकार ने आभूषणों के निर्यात को बढ़ाने के कुछ उपाय किए हैं। हाल में उठाए गए कुछ अधिक महत्वपूर्ण कदमों में शामिल है। (i) निर्यातोन्मुख एककों (ईओयू)/निर्यात प्रसंस्करण क्षेत्र के एककों (ईपीजेड) को पूर्ववर्ती वर्ष के निर्यात मूल्य का 10% सादे स्वर्ण आभूषणों के प्रति 10 ग्राम पर 400 रु॰ की